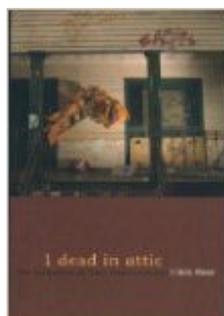


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1 Dead In Attic



Synopsis

1 Dead in Attic is a collection of stories by Times-Picayune columnist Chris Rose, recounting the first four harrowing months of life in New Orleans after Katrina. It is a roller coaster ride of observations, commentary, emotions, tragedy and even humor - in a way that only Rose could find in a devastated wasteland. They are stories of the dead and the living, stories of survivors and believers, stories of hope and despair. And stories about refrigerators. With photographs by British photojournalist Charlie Varley, 1 Dead in Attic freeze frames New Orleans caught between an old era and a new, New Orleans in its most desperate time, as it struggled out of floodwaters and willed itself back to life in the autumn and early winter of 2005.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"1 Dead in Attic" is a collection of post-Katrina columns from the "Times-Picayune" in New Orleans. The author's eye for the odd detail, the stark eloquence of his to-the-point prose, his gift for finding dire humor in dire times, and his amazing lack of self-pity create gripping dispatches from what Rose calls "the Big Uneasy." Rose's writing makes the devastation more real, more personal, than ever before, and his love for New Orleans -- a place I don't much know -- is infectious. Perhaps the best way to convey my enthusiasm for the book is to share a few passages and let Rose speak for himself: "I drive around and try to figure out those Byzantine markings and symbols that the cops and the National Guard spray-painted on all the houses around here, cryptic communications that tell the story of who or what was or wasn't inside the house when the floodwater rose to the ceiling. * In some cases, there's no interpretation needed. There's one I pass on St. Roch Avenue in the 8th Ward at least once a week. It says: '1 Dead in Attic.'" Katherine [the author's young daughter,

staying with relatives in Maryland] asks me about the specific fate of two other friends, Julia and Nadia. I tell her that, truth is, I have no idea what happened to Julia and Nadia. Not a clue. Vanished. They're just gone and we don't know where to or for how long and maybe we'll see them again and maybe we won't." "Refrigerator clusters have started appearing all over the area, as one guy dumps his fridge on a corner away from his house and then -- like iron shavings drawn to a magnet -- suddenly there are five appliances on the corner, then 10, then 15.

I bought this book after hearing Chris Rose talk about it on NPR. I was intrigued by the title and moved by his commentary. As I recall, he either read in its entirety or discussed "Despair," the account of a "New Orleans girl" who married a man from Atlanta who later committed suicide. Mr. Rose says in his introduction that these are most of the columns that he wrote for THE TIMES-PICAYUNE between August 29, 2005 and New Years Day, 2006. Photographs by Charlie Varley are included with the essays. Mr. Rose ably puts a face on the tragedy of Katrina and captures the sorrows but resilience of the locals, creating portraits of people you will not soon forget: the magnet man, an artist who now collects refrigerator magnets to cover his 1994 Chevy Blazer; the cat lady who never left the city and lives with thirty-four cats; Finis Shellnut who supplies fine frozen steaks from a freezer in the abandoned Antoine's to the California National Guard et al. In another corner is Rev. Bill Shanks who apparently believes that "God in his mercy" purged New Orleans of Mardi Gras, "Southern Decadence and the sodomites, the witchcraft workers, false religion." Mr. Rose reminds the reader (and Reverend Shanks if he read said column) that the French Quarter, where all these abominations took place, was left pretty much intact by Katrina. In every essay both Mr. Rose's love of New Orleans and his humanity shine through.

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